



SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND CONSERVANCY

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San Jacinto Battleground Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting, preserving and securing the San Jacinto Battleground for future generations by facilitating conservation of land, artifacts and native habitat original to the 1836 battlefield and educating the public about the history and far-reaching significance of the battle for Texas independence.

June 3, 2012

Mr. Neil Thomas
c/o Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

Re: Battleship *Texas* Dry Berth Project

Dear Neil:

Thank you for your email of June 1, 2012 and the letter from AECOM to TPWD dated May 31, 2012.

If I understand this correctly, AECOM's letter confirms that all five of AECOM's proposed dry berth designs will cost the state far in excess of the approved budget. Proceanic's four proposed dry berth designs also significantly exceed budget constraints. It appears that even if TPWD could obtain additional funds to approve one of these nine designs, none of the studies conducted thus far indicate that a dry berth will successfully hold the ship out of water for a reasonable period of time without the ship collapsing upon itself. In addition, there is no indication of post-construction maintenance costs.

Our organization wants to work collaboratively with you and others to preserve the ship for future generations while keeping in mind the limitations of state finances and TPWD's mission to preserve and restore the ambience of San Jacinto Battleground's historic 1836 landscape. After four years of analyzing various dry berth solutions for the ship prepared by competent professionals, we would like to suggest that the time has come to abandon a dry berth solution and seriously consider a different approach to the ship's future. Our four-step recommendation is as follows:

1. Engage AECOM to conduct a ship towability analysis for the purpose of towing the ship to Galveston for dry dock repairs. This analysis should determine (a) the repairs and procedures needed to tow the ship safely to Galveston (as opposed to repairs needed to dry berth the ship), and (b) the cost of repairs and towing to Galveston. A towability analysis was recommended by Proceanic in its 2008 report and by TPWD staff in its dry berth report to the LBB in 2008.

2. As part of the analysis, AECOM also should be asked to recommend (a) whether a new hull or hull coating could be applied that will last beyond the typical 20-year cycle for dry dock hull repairs, (b) what repairs in addition to hull repairs are needed to make the ship safe for visitors in a wet berth environment, and the cost of such additional repairs, and (c) the estimated life of recommended repairs.

3. We are suggesting a tow to Galveston because we understand that the only dry dock facility in the Houston-Galveston area capable of handling a ship this size is the Gulf Copper facility in Galveston. Therefore, TPWD should also obtain a bid from Gulf Copper regarding the feasibility, cost, and timing of dry dock repairs at this facility.

4. Ask the LBB to appoint an independent state government task force to (a) evaluate the reports and cost estimates obtained from undertaking the above three steps, (b) evaluate private sector funding options if additional funding is needed to accomplish towing and dry dock repairs, and (c) if dry dock repairs in Galveston are feasible, analyze the optimal location for the ship's wet berth in anticipation of the completion of such repairs, as opposed to assuming the return of the ship to its present berth at San Jacinto.

If towing the ship to Galveston and performing the required dry dock repairs is feasible, Step 4(c)'s analysis of alternative wet berth locations is a critical part of this process because the ship's financial and physical problems are a symptom of the ship's location at San Jacinto battleground. The simple fact is: the ship does not receive a sufficient number of visitors or revenues at San Jacinto to pay for its operations, repairs or maintenance. For the ship to be effectively saved, the future financial sustainability of the ship must be considered. This requires (a) proactively searching for berthing sites that could generate more visitors and revenues, (b) consideration of new locations without regard to whether the state will own the potential site, and (c) consideration of different ship ownership arrangements. All creative options must be encouraged and objectively analyzed.

The four-step approach we are recommending can only be successful if it is undertaken from the sole perspective of what is in the best interests of the ship and state taxpayers. We are hopeful that if the above steps can be explored in a timely manner, recommendations concerning the ship's future can be made to NAVSEA and the Legislature before the start of the 2013 legislative session.

Neil, we are very appreciative of the time that you and others have spent addressing these complicated issues.

Best regards,

SAN JACINTO BATTLEGROUND CONSERVANCY



Jan DeVault